A FAMILIAR TALK.

General J. F. B. Marshall on "Hawaii Fifty Years Ago."

The comfortable hall of the Y. M. C. Association in the building on the corner of Hotel and Alakea streets, was well filled Tuesday evening with an audience of ladies and gentlemen, many of whom are quite prominent members of this community. The assemblage had gathered together for the purpose of being regaled with listening to a "Familiar Talk," by Gen'l J. F. B. Marshall, an old former resident, and who purposed giving a reminiscence of "Hawaii Fifty Years Ago." The speaker for the evening, was introduced by Hon. Henry Waterhouse, the President of the Y. M. C. A. After the close of his "Talk," which was listened to throughout with rapt interest, General Marshall was the recipient at the hands of F. W. Lowrey, chairman of the entertainment committee, of a hearty vote of thanks. Following is the address of General Marshall:

HAWAII FIFTY YEARS AGO.

In these days of frequent and rapid communication with all foreign countries, when the United States, once five or six months away, is now brought within a week, it is not easy to realize the former isolation of this group from the rest of the world. Fifty years ago I arrived here, after a six months' passage, from Boston; no steam vessel had then made its way into the Pacific, Prof. Morse had not then revolutionized the intercourse and commerce of the world with the electric telegraph. A yearly ship from Boston, an occasional one from Edropean and Asiatic ports, a small trade with the various ports on the Pacific coast—from Kamschatka to Valparaiso—with the spring and fall visits of the whaling fleet, comprised our intercourse with the outside world. At intervals, a vessel of war would look in upon us, either for its own amusement or to see how our little tempest in a teapot, of internal politics, was bubbling, and sometimes taking a hand in the particular discussion by giving a little more or less wholesome advice, at the cannon's mouth, or that of the commander, and then sailing away again, leaving one party very jubilant, and the other down in the mouth, which conditions would perhaps be reversed by the next warship that arrived. Nobody then seemed to be in a hurry. Time was of little account. Items of State news were to us as interesting are now the latest cablegrams. In the delicious climate of these islands in those halcyon days we lived an easy "dolce far niente" sort of existence which so far at least as mere physical enjoyment, was infinitely preferable to the hurried, bustling, anxious life of the present day, with its steamboats, railroads, telephones and its sharp competition. While the little schemes of the different foreign nationalities to secure a preponderating influence with the native government but furnished the necessary food for that social gossip so essential to the life of every intelligent and well ordered community.

On my return in the spring of 1849 from a visit to the United States, coming as usual by the then rapid transit route of a five months voyage around Cape Horn, I found that a social and commercial revolution had taken place at Honolulu in my absence. The gold fever, excited by successive reports, each more dazzling than the last, had rapidly risen to its height, and the wild, mad rush to the California mines had begun. The easy going indolent character of the place had gone for ever, and a feverish bustling, hurry-skurry sort of life had taken its place. That revolution, like most revolutions, did not go backward, and those days of laziness and ease have never returned.

I reached Honolulu in 1834, a boy in search of health, following a medical prescription. I had never been away from home before, and was astonished at many things. Perhaps at nothing more than seeing as I landed from the good ship Fama, a portly lady sitting in what looked like a child's wagon, which was drawn by a span of bronze colored bipeds, whose only covering was a girdle. I had not then heard of the jinrikisha of the Japanese, but soon became accustomed to what I found was the fashionable equipage of the place.

The Kuhina nui, or Premier of the Kingdom, Kinau, a chiefess of high rank and much force of character, had died two days before my arrival. She was the wife of Governor Kekuaunoa, and mother of Moses, Lot and Alexander and Victoria. Her body lay in state two months, during all of which time her army of retainers were seated around the building, keeping up an incessant and most mournful wailing, without intermission, night and day. Her funeral which was attended by the whole population, native and foreign, was a strange and most impressive mingling of barbaric and civilized pomp and ceremony, which I have never seen equalled here or elsewhere.

The first house I entered on my arrival in Honolulu was then the residence of Capt. Dominis, father of the ex-Governor of Oahu. It is still standing on Fort street, makai of the Catholic Church, and to reach what now is the Fort street entrance I followed my guide among taro patches at much risk of a muddy bath. The streets of Honolulu were then only being laid out, and Fort street, above Hotel street, was still all kalo patches.

The Government was gradually just emerging from barbarism and making progress in the methods of civilization. The principal business of the group at that time, as you doubtless know, was that of the fleet of whaleships which came to the ports Spring and Fall to refit, and, in part, to ship their catch of oil and bone to the United States. After going to Lahaina, Hilo, or some other port where they could get supplies to better advantage than in Honolulu, they would come to anchor and lay off and on outside the reef to escape harbor dues, while their captains went ashore to negotiate their bills of exchange and transact other business that could not well be done at the other ports. It was a beautiful sight, and not an uncommon one in the season, to see over a hundred full-rigged ships passing and repassing each other in the offing, their white sails glistening in the morning sun.

A century ago saddle horses of the Andalusian breed introduced by Capt. Cleveland were plentiful, and as to the cost of keeping them, as they required neither grain or shoes was small. Almost everybody had his or her saddle horse, and riding was the chief amusement. It was an inspiriting sight and an exhilating one to those who supposed the cavalcade, to see two or thirty riders of both sexes galloping along the Nuuanu road or out on the barren plains of Waikiki, and on Sunday afternoons when every man, woman and child that could get a nag, from the King and his suite, down to the lowest of subjects, and every jack-tar on liberty, as well as his captain and officers, were out for an equestrian frolic, it was a brilliant and many-hued scene not to be forgotten.

At that time if my memory serves me there was but one carriage horse and wheeled vehicle (except the little go-carts I have mentioned) at the islands; a large white horse named "Rocky Mountain" from the route by which he had been brought, and a two-wheeled open gig, was then owned by Peirce & Brewer, and being in constant requisition for invalids in need of an airing was called the "Hospital carriage." After streets and roads about the city had been graded, other vehicles and carriage horses were imported, among which was a heavy English chariot which had been sent by Queen Victoria to Queen Pomare of the Society islands where it was useless. The great number of private and public carriages now here surprises me, and my wonder as to how all the latter are supported does not cease.

The agricultural resources of the Group were as yet undeveloped, though its possibilities in that direction were being recognised by foreigners. Rude machinery for sugar-making, had been put in operation by enterprising residents in various parts of the islands. The first sugar plantation on what was then thought a large scale, was established by Ladd & Co. on the Island of Kauai in 1837 or '8, The first number of the HAWAIIAN GAZETTE, which was issued July 30, 1836, speaks hopefully of Kauai enterprises, and praises some samples of preserved oranges and corned beef shipped from there to the Honolulu market. The same number also contains a letter from the King approving of the establishment of a newspaper, which I will quote:

"To Stephen D. Mackintosh, Honolulu.

"I assent to the letter which you sent me. It affords me pleasure to see the works of other lands and things that are new. If I was there I should very much like to see. I have said to Kinau, make printing presses. My thought is ended. Love to you.

By KING KAUIKEAOULI."

His Majesty's desire to encourage foreign enterprise was commendable, though his ideas as to the needs of a newspaper were somewhat cloudy.

There were no horses or oxen trained to work in those days. The first plow which turned up the virgin soil for cane planting on Ladd & Co.'s land, was drawn by a host of natives. In June, 1840, a native boy's arm was crushed in a sugar mill in Nuuanu valley, but I do not recall the name of the owner of the mill.

The only foreign church at that time was the Seaman's Bethel, supported by the Seaman's Aid Society in New York. Rev. John Diell was the pastor. He was succeeded, after an interval, by the late Rev. S. C. Damon, a valued personal friend, whom you all knew and esteemed. During that interval an effort was made to have an Episcopal church established here, and the service was for a time read every Sunday in the Seaman's chapel by the American Consul, P. A. Brinsmade.

In 1840, the year in which the missionary Williams, and his companion, were killed by the natives at Erromango, the native schooner Keola capsized, with loss of nearly all on board, and two women performed the almost incredible feat of swimming twenty-five miles in about thirty hours, to the shore at Kahoolawe, one of them carrying her husband on her back for a long distance till he died from exhaustion.

While perhaps more attention was being given to the cultivation and manufacture of sugar than to any other branch of agriculture, and as the result has shown with reason, various experiments were being made and more or less capital being invested (and buried) in other directions. A silk plantation was started on a large scale at Koloa, Kauai, where the mulberry tree was planted over many acres, silkworms and machinery imported, and three operatives, who had been taught the business in a large establishment in Northampton, Mass., brought out, at large outlay, and with sanguine expectations of large profits which were not fulfilled. Coffee plantations were also established on different islands, with equally sanguine hopes, and most of them with equal loss, though in some localities, coffee is still grown and I believe at a profit.

In August, 1840, a shipment of 200 tons of sugar was made to New York by the bark Flora, the largest shipment that had then been made. By the same vessel the first shipment was made of raw silk, which was pronounced unsurpassed for evenness of thread, strength and gloss. By the same vessel Rev. Hiram Bingham and family, the head of the American Mission, sailed for home after twenty years labor among the natives.

In the same year (1840) the Polynesian, a weekly newspaper, was established by James Jackson Jarves, the Sandwich Islands Gazette having died a natural death. After ably conducting the paper for a year and a half, Mr. Jarves left the islands for home, returning in 1844 and resuming its publication. When he left in 1841 there was a general wish among the English-speaking residents that the paper should be continued, and I was asked to take charge. I consented with reluctance, as I had no time to spare for the duty, no experience and no training in editorial work, and an editor of a paper so isolated from the rest of the world had no easy task before him. But good nature being one of my virtues or failings, I consented, and after sitting up late nights and consuming much midnight oil, I concocted a glowing editorial and prospectus, full of grand pledges of what I intended to do and what I intended not to do, and triumphantly issued my first number, of which a large edition was printed. Wondering why my printer did not send for the "copy" which I had prepared for the next week's issue, I learned, to my horror, that after working off my first number, he had celebrated the great event so heartily, that in a happy but very inebriated condition he had shipped in a whaler for a cruise in the Arctic ocean! As there was no other printer to be had within 20,000 miles, my editorial career came to a sudden and untimely end. I could not even put on record my emphatic objection to that clause of the French treaty, then recently signed, which, by reducing the duty on spirits to 5 per cent., had enabled my wretched printer at small outlay to put "an enemy in his mouth to steal away his brains," or to recall the epitaph on the dead infant, so apposite to my editorial aspiration:

"If I so soon was to be done for,
I wonder what I was begun for."

But my failures and pilikias in this case were but a type of those which have beset the pioneers of almost every early enterprise in those days. The rocks and quicksands on which they were wrecked, were such as ruin nearly all enterprises requiring special knowledge, skill, and experience which are undertaken by men, however intelligent, who cannot command those requisites. That the judgment of these pioneers was often vindicated by the success of others who profit by their dearly bought experience, must be their only and with some spirits is their ample consolation. It may be that in time all those other early enterprises which then failed may find a successful lodgment on Hawaiian soil, and that silk, coffee, wheat, etc., may yet be profitably grown.

The decadence of the native population, whose grass huts were then scattered over the islands and formed picturesque objects in and about Honolulu and its neighboring plains and valleys, and the great increase of foreign laborers, which thus becomes a necessity if the prosperity of the group is to continue, bring up grave questions, the satisfactory solution of which seems to become more and more difficult. I do not presume to enter upon the discussion of that question. But I feel a deep interest in it. Wiser and better informed minds have been devoted to it, and perhaps all that wisdom can devise has been done to arrest the decay of the native race. I have great faith, however, in the efficacy of industrial schools and I heartily agree with General Armstrong that the hope of the race is in the general introduction of such schools as the Kamehameha school, and the one about to be established on Kauai. The wonderful success of what is called in the United States the Hampton idea, as applied to the training of the Negro and the Indian which has conquered the opposition and the prejudices of the experienced educators who predicted its utter failure, and which has come under my own personal observation, gives me strong hope that if universally adopted here, it would give vitality, force and manliness, not only to the native children but to those of other nationalities born at these islands.